

Strategies for Differentiating in the classroom (and outside)

Presented by David Apodaca

Background

- Vice Principal at MLK MS in SBCUSD
- Secondary Education Program Specialist for math intervention at the district level
- Taught 8th Algebra I at Arrowview
- Taught 9th – 12th grade math at Sierra HS (continuation)

Outcomes

- Learn multiple ways to differentiate in and outside a classroom.
- To understand the necessity of differentiating lessons on a daily basis.

Why we want to differentiate

- Students learn in different ways and at different speeds.

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \text{Targeted} & + & \text{Time} & = & \text{Student} \\ \text{Instruction} & & & & \text{Learning} \\ \hline \text{(Constant)} & & \text{(Constant)} & & \text{(Variable)} \\ \text{(Variable)} & & \text{(Variable)} & & \text{(Constant)} \end{array}$$

Pyramid Response to Intervention

Why we want to differentiate

- Fair isn't giving all students the same thing...Fair is giving all students what they need.
- Behavior problems decrease when students are able to the work.
- Need to respond to students who need intervention and enrichment.

Differentiation

- There are several ways that we can differentiate lesson(s):
 - Differentiate the instruction.
 - Differentiate the assignments by applying different levels of rigor throughout the lesson.
 - Differentiate the assignments and activities that students are doing to meet the needs of the each student.

Differentiate the instruction

- Direct Instruction
- Cooperative Groups
- Collaborative learning
- Engaging Activities

Differentiate Assignment

- Tiered assignments
- Student choice
- Homework

Differentiated Activities

- Requires extensive planning
- GREAT classroom management skills
- Student buy –in
- Teacher buy-in
- Consistency
- Data

Differentiated activities (cont.)

- What does it look like.
- Can be determined using PLD.
- May take several days

Differentiated activities (cont.)

- What needs to be in place prior to differentiating in a classroom.
 - Systems for group work
 - Moving in/out of groups
 - What to do when students have a question
 - What to do when students are done.
 - Behavioral expectations
 - Ability to multi-task
 - Organizational skills
 - Clarity in delivering instructions
 - Ability to analyze data and know your students

Differentiated activities (cont.)

For Example:

- 1) Students were all given same direct instructions and engaging activities over the course of the week.
- 2) Students were then assessed (quiz, exit card, common assessment).
- 3) Based on DATA students are placed in groups.

Differentiated activities (cont.)

1. Students who show high levels of proficiency in needed skill are placed in one group.
2. Students who show low levels of proficiency and basic levels of proficiency are placed in group 2.
3. Students who show below basic and far below basic levels of proficiency are placed in group 3. (keep this small, bigger than 10 and you lose the effectiveness)

Differentiated activities (cont.)

- Create tasks cards for each group.
- Create a movement plan for groups
- Create anchor activities
- Create a system for answering questions

Differentiated activities (cont.)

Helpful Hints:

1. Usually easiest to start with lowest group.
2. Don't get stuck with one group to long.
3. The more explicit your tasks cards are the easier it will be for you.
4. Practice: Praise – Prompt and Leave. (Fred Jones)
5. Don't be afraid to abandon ship if too many students are getting lost. You can always try again.
6. Leave time for closure.

Differentiation

- Side notes
 - It is not easy
 - The larger the amount of students who are struggling, the hard this is.
 - Makes you look at first instruction.
 - BE FLEXIBLE
 - Starting this in stages can be a good way to introduce this to a class.
 - Need to have BIG PICTURE in mind.
 - May not do this with every standard

More differentiation

- Taking it one more step
- Differentiating across teachers.
 - Identified essential standards
 - Collaborated on how and when to teach essential standards
 - Assessed students using PLD for essential standards
 - Regroup our students using similar format for in class differentiation.

More differentiating cont.

- Worked with homogenous group for 2 – 3 days intervening or enriching.
- Re – test was given in necessary classes.
- Students would return to regular teacher and cycle would repeat.

Outcomes

- SMART goals were achieved.
- Behavior went down
- Production went up
- Teacher satisfaction
- Students were exposed to different styles of teaching. (+/-)
- Students felt comfortable coming to either one of the teachers for extra tutoring after school.

More Outcome

- By 2nd trimester all math teachers were involved.
- By 3rd trimester whole school was trying to implement.
- All subgroups made AYP via safe harbor. 😊

Things to consider

- Three teachers who bought in.
- Willing to think outside the box.
- We all had good classroom management.
- We were all willing to work with other student who were not ours.
- We had a strong PLC
- We were willing to work after school.
- Strong administration support
- QEIA class size reduction
- Math coach willing to teach during our conferences.

Final Thoughts

- Differentiation should be happening every day.
- Don't be afraid to think outside the quadrilateral.